

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA – 07) voted in support of H Con Res 322, a resolution that recognizes the historic significance of the 60th anniversary of the re-establishment of the sovereign and independent state of Israel as a homeland for the Jewish people. The measure reaffirms the bonds of friendship and cooperation which have existed between the United States and Israel for the past 60 years, and commits to strengthening those bonds. The measure passed 417 – 0. — “I was proud to vote in support of this important resolution today,” said Congressman Sestak. “I have visited Israel at least five times and to have seen firsthand the courage and steadfast resolve of its people. Throughout Israel’s 60-year history, Israelis have fought overwhelming odds to reestablish the birthplace of the Jewish People, and today it remains the only democracy in the Middle East. Surrounded by hostile neighbors on each of its borders, Israel is steadfastly working towards its goals of peace and security.”

The resolution further commends the people of Israel for their remarkable achievements in building a new state and a pluralistic, democratic society in the face of terrorism, as well as hostility, ostracism, and belligerence from many of their neighbors. It also reaffirms its support for Israel’s right to defend itself against threats to its security and existence.

The measure notes that the desire of the Jewish people to establish an independent modern state is an outgrowth of the existence of the historic kingdom of Israel established 3,000 years ago, with the city of Jerusalem as its capital; and that for over 2,000 years, there has been continuous Jewish presence and residence in the land comprising Israel.

The Congressman recently spoke of the historic importance of the relationship between the United States and Israel when he was a panelist for a discussion of foreign relations when the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia held an Afternoon of Jewish Learning titled “Israel at 60.”

During that discussion, the Congressman noted that a safe and secure Israel is necessary not only for Israelis, but for the future of the democratic world. While serving as Director for Defense Policy under President Clinton, the Congressman helped to plan Operation RELIANT MERMAID, the first ever military exercise between Israel and a primarily Islamic country, Turkey. He noted that the operation granted him unique insight into the possibilities of where nations working together with United States leadership can lead to a more secure future. He also added that he hope to continue to work closely with both Israel and its military for lasting peace in the region.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.